

CHANGE AND TRANSLATION

At this point in the evolution of culture theory, very few would contest the claim that change is a built-in feature of culture. Implied is not only that cultures are changeable in principle, so to speak, but also that, given the time, every single cultural system would indeed undergo some change. In fact, a culture which would have failed to show change over a considerable period of time is bound to get marginalized and become obsolete, if not stop functioning as a living culture altogether. At the same time, cultural systems are also prone to manifest a certain resistance to changes, especially if they are deemed too drastic. When renewal seems to involve such changes, they may well be rejected in an attempt to maintain what has already been achieved; in other words, retain whatever equilibrium the culture has reached. Innovation and conservation thus appear as two major contending forces in cultural dynamics.

One 'big' hypothesis which has been put forward in an attempt to reconcile these two extremes claims that new models do manage to make their way into an extant cultural repertoire in spite of the system's inherent resistance to changes if and when those novelties are introduced under disguise; that is, as if they still represented an established option within the culture in question. Inasmuch as the cover is effective, it is only when penetration of products and production processes pertaining to the new model has been completed that the receiving culture would appear to have undergone change, often bringing it to the verge of a new (and different) state of equilibrium. Needless to say, the process as such may take a while. Also, it tends to involve a series of smaller, more intricate changes, which may not be recognized as changes as they are occurring. Even something which appears to represent a cultural "revolution" would thus normally be found to have followed an evolutionary process.

A lot of this tends to go unnoticed by the average person-in-the-culture, precisely because many of the potentially new products s/he may encounter in daily life have been disguised as standing for something else, much more established, much less alien, and hence much less of a threat to the culture's stability. By contrast, those who act in accordance with the new model, and produce the behaviour which will be paving the way for its ultimate reception, often do realize its explosive potentials. It is precisely out of such a realization that they may decide to conceal the true nature of their behaviour, namely, in an attempt to introduce whatever innovations, they may entail in a controlled way, and in smaller doses, so that they may go unnoticed by the masses, or those who dominate the culture while all this is happening, until the innovations have been [partly] incorporated into the culture and are no longer felt as a potential threat.

My intention is far from claiming that this is the only way a new model may make its way into a cultural repertoire (because I don't believe it is). On the other hand, I have no wish to devote too many efforts to modifying — and necessarily complexifying — the 'disguise' hypothesis either (for instance, by specifying the conditions under which it is more or less likely to gain [or lose] validity). What I'll be doing instead would amount to adding some weight to the very feasibility of such a 'big', overarching hypothesis as a possible explanation of cultural dynamics; and I will do so on the basis of one kind of evidence: the creation and utilization of fictitious translations (also known as pseudo-translations); a recurring type of cultural behaviour which I have been preoccupied with for almost twenty years, and from changing points of view. (Toury, Gideon. *Translation and Cultural Change: Studies in History, Norms and Image-Projection*. Edited by Eva Hung, Benjamins, 2005, pp. 3–18.)

1. According to the essay, what is a built-in feature of culture?

- A) Resistance to change
- B) Preservation of equilibrium
- C) Inherent stability
- D) Capacity for change

2. What is the consequence for a culture that fails to show change over time?

- A) Marginalization and obsolescence
- B) Reinforcement of stability
- C) Evolutionary progress
- D) Increased resistance to change

3. What are the two major contending forces in cultural dynamics, mentioned in the essay?

- A) Change and preservation
- B) Resistance and innovation
- C) Equilibrium and renewal
- D) Stability and evolution

4. What is the outcome when new models are successfully integrated into a culture?

- A) Marginalization of the existing culture
- B) Preservation of the culture's equilibrium
- C) Evolution toward a new state of equilibrium
- D) Rejection of the new models

5. What type of evidence does the essay use to support the feasibility of the "disguise" hypothesis?

- A) Linguistic studies of cultural dynamics
- B) Anthropological research on cultural behaviour
- C) Analysis of fictitious translations (pseudo-translations)
- D) Historical examples of cultural revolutions

Answer 1: D) Capacity for change

Answer 2: A) Marginalization and obsolescence

Answer 3: B) Resistance and innovation

Answer 4: C) Evolution toward a new state of equilibrium

Answer 5: C) Analysis of fictitious translations (pseudo-translations)